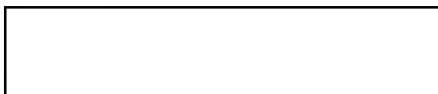


WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending 18 March 1972

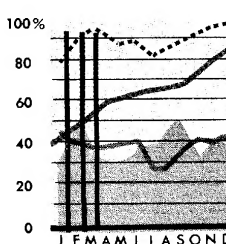
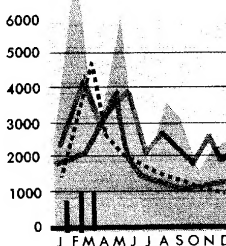
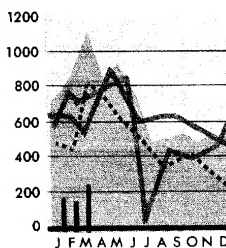
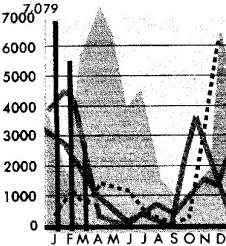
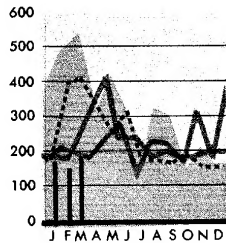
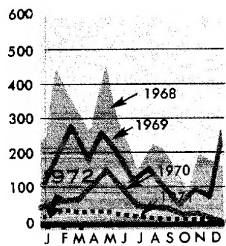
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Top Secret

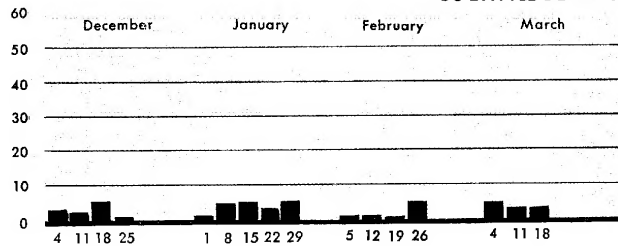
NSA review completed

SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

1968-1972
Weekly average for each monthDECEMBER 1971 - MARCH 1972
Weekly data as reported

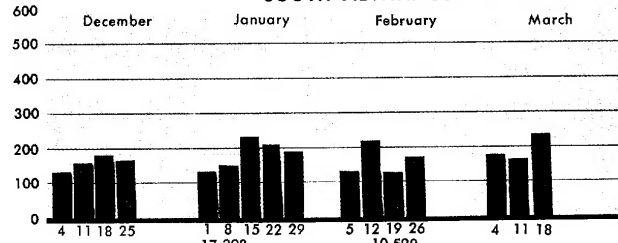
US BATTLE DEATHS

remained the same as last week--2.



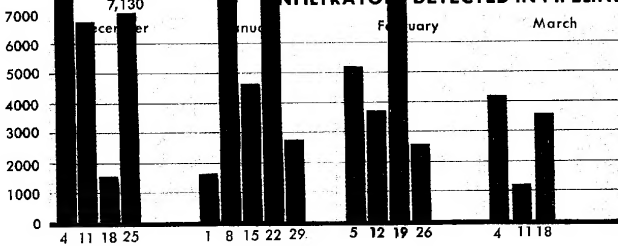
SOUTH VIETNAMESE BATTLE DEATHS

increased from last week's 166 to 239. The official total will change as late reports are received and will be lower than the figures released to the press by the GVN.



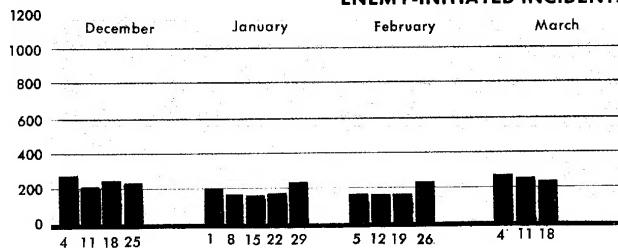
INFILTRATION DETECTED IN PIPELINE

include four regular, [redacted] and two special purpose groups totaling 3,529 personnel. The infiltration estimate for Cambodia and South Vietnam since 1 October now stands at 97,300-99,300.



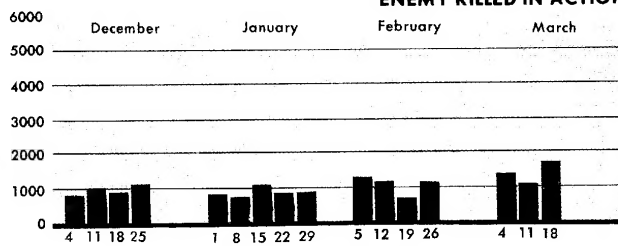
ENEMY-INITIATED INCIDENTS

decreased to 227 from the 247 reported last week.



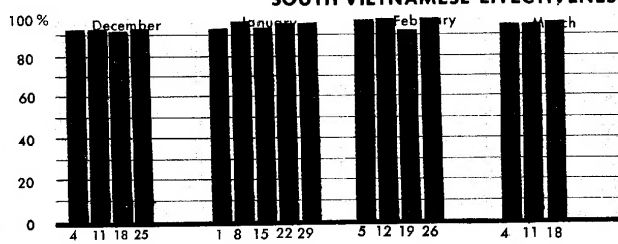
ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION

rose sharply from last week's 1,025 to 1,731, the highest weekly total since 2 October 1971.



SOUTH VIETNAMESE EFFECTIVENESS

as measured by the percentage of enemy killed by GVN forces, increased to 98% from last week's 97%.



Statistics for the latest week shown are preliminary

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Enemy Activity

Enemy-initiated activity in South Vietnam continued at a moderate level during the week. In most areas South Vietnamese forces have held the initiative, and in several major actions they have inflicted serious losses on the enemy. Along the Demilitarized Zone, enemy gunners directed fairly heavy barrages against friendly defensive strong points, but there were no major ground thrusts. In Thua Thien Province, the enemy has concentrated his attention on FSB VEGHEL. For more than a week combat activity has flared around this strong point which blocks the western approach to Hue. A combination of aggressive action by ARVN on the ground and B-52 ARC LIGHT strikes has inflicted heavy losses on the attacking North Vietnamese 6th Regiment. There are tenuous signs, however, that another North Vietnamese regiment -- the NVA 29th -- is now moving toward this area. In the western highlands of Military Region (MR) 2, ARVN forces are continuing their preemptive actions against the Communist forces in the area. Three sharp engagements last week north and south of the town of Dak To have cost the enemy over 100 dead and may have disrupted his attack plans in this area for the present. Farther south in MR 3, South Vietnamese forces assisted by good air support are continuing their cross-border operation into Svay Rieng Province of Cambodia. They have exacted a substantial toll of enemy dead and uncovered a large amount of food supplies -- so far over 400 tons of rice and 45 tons of salt.

In north Laos, on the weekend of 18-19 March, the enemy finally initiated a major drive to overrun Long Tieng. The remaining government positions around Sam Thong fell to the enemy on 18 March. Subsequent attacks along Skyline Ridge resulted in the loss of one friendly position, while another is still being contested. Carrying out an already planned thrust to disrupt the enemy from the rear, General Vang Pao has launched a task force southward from his base north of the Plaine des Jarres (Site 32). The advance elements of that force have moved overland two-thirds of the way to their objective on Route 7, the major enemy supply line on the Plaine des Jarres, without serious opposition. Another prong of the same friendly offensive effort is now located east of the town of Xieng Khouangville, and its elements are moving westward toward a major enemy logistical complex. The next several days will be critical for the whole Long Tieng area. In the rest of Laos, military activity has remained light.

In Cambodia, enemy-initiated activity during the week was at a low level. Government forces conducting Operation ANGKOR CHEY, near Angkor Wat, reported receiving several attacks by fire and a small number of ground probes. Communist units also continued to harass Cambodian Army (FANK) elements to the west of Siem Reap, where three FANK battalions are attempting a sweep along Route 6. Only light and scattered contacts have been reported elsewhere in the country. In most of the fighting now going on, government forces are in contact mainly with locally raised Khmer Communist units which have the mission of tying down FANK. Main force Vietnamese Communist units in Cambodia continue to be deployed near the South Vietnamese border, from where they may be preparing to make new forays into South Vietnam's MR 3.

Enemy Infiltration and Logistics

The acceptance of an additional 3,529 personnel during the week brings the estimate of NVA infiltrators into Cambodia and South Vietnam since 1 October 1971 to some 97,300 - 99,300. On the supply side, the Soviet Union has shipped over 1,000 trucks to North Vietnam by rail through China between 1 January and 10 March 1972, probably part of the over 5,000 trucks requested by Hanoi late in 1971 for the whole of 1972. Such a large number shipped in so short a period suggests an urgency which may reflect heavy losses of trucks by the North Vietnamese so far this dry season. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Poor weather conditions in the northern input passes (Nape and Mu Gia) are hampering his efforts there, [REDACTED]

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Communist Developments

On 17 March, a Soviet delegation led by Marshal Batitsky, USSR Deputy Minister of Defense and head of the Soviet Union's air defense command, arrived in Hanoi on an unpublicized visit. Batitsky is almost certainly there to discuss the state of North Vietnam's air defense network, and his trip may presage future improvements in Hanoi's air defense capabilities. The USSR to date has not given North Vietnam its most modern air defense equipment, including SA-3 missiles and MIG-23 aircraft. It is possible that the North Vietnamese may have asked for a massive new infusion of air defense equipment not only to replace recent losses, but also in the hope of making the air war much more expensive for the U.S. -- in terms of both aircraft and crews lost. (Marshal Batitsky was last in Hanoi in 1965 when the build-up in Hanoi's air defenses began.) In the past several weeks no less than three other delegations from Moscow -- led by the Soviet Ministers of Communications, Culture, and Merchant Marine -- have also visited North Vietnam. Whether coincidence or not, the visits have been well timed to demonstrate Moscow's close affinity to Hanoi in this period of North Vietnamese apprehension over President Nixon's trip to China.

Political Developments in Cambodia

At the end of the week, Lon Nol designated Son Ngoc Thanh as Prime Minister of his new government, after various other leading Cambodian political figures had refused to accept the post. It is clear that Lon Nol intends to have a dominant voice in naming the rest of the cabinet, and he probably does not intend to allow the new Prime Minister much freedom of action. Student groups, who believe that their agitation resulted in the removal of Sirik Matak from the government, will now be encouraged to direct further agitation against other aspects or personalities of the government not to their liking.

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